

AN IMPOSSIBLE MAN.

BY IAN MACLAREN.
Author of "The Bonnie Briar Bush," Etc.
(Copyright, 1895, by John Watson.)

"We must have Tricky Marsden on the Thursday"—for Mrs. Leslie was arranging two dinner parties. "She will be in her element that evening, but what are we to do with Mr. Marsden?"

"Isn't it rather the custom to invite a husband with his wife? He might even expect to be included," said John Leslie. "Do you know I'm glad he came to Putney; spring is lovely in the garden."

"Never mind spring just now," as Leslie threatened an exit to the lawn; "you might have some consideration for an afflicted hostess, and give your mind to the Marsden problem."

"It was Marsden brought spring into my mind," and Leslie sat down with that expression of resignation on his face peculiar to husbands consulted on domestic affairs; "he was telling me this morning in the train that he had just finished a table of trees in the order of their budding, a sort of spring priority list; his love for statistics is amazing."

"He is sitting to be known on the 9 train; the men keep their eye on him and bolt into thirds to escape; he gave a morning on the influenza death-rate lately, and that kind of thing spreads. But he's not a bad fellow for all that," concluded Leslie; "he's perfectly straight in business, and that is saying something; I rather enjoy half an hour with him."

"Very likely you do," said his wife, with impatience, "because your mind has a squint, and you get amusement out of odd people; but everyone has not your taste for the tiresome. He is enough to devastate a dinner table, do you remember that escapade of his last year?"

"You mean when he corrected you about the American passage, and gave the sailings of the Atlantic liners since '89," and Leslie lay back to enjoy the past; "it seemed to me most instructive, and everyone gave up conversation to listen."

"Because no one could do anything else with that voice booming through the room. I can still hear him: 'the Columbia' six days, four hours, five minutes.' Then I arose and delivered the table."

"It was only human to be a little nettled by his accuracy," but you ought not to have repeated so soon for he gave the express trains of England a little later, and hinted at the American lines. One might almost call such a memory genius."

"Which is often another name for idiosyncrasy; some one was telling me yesterday that quiet, steady men rush out of the room at the sound of his voice, and their wives have to tell all sorts of falsehoods."

"Tricky is one of my oldest and dearest friends, and it would be a shame to pass her over; but I will not have her husband on any account."

"Perhaps you are right as a hostess; it is a little hard for a frivolous circle to live up to Marsden, and I hear that he has got up the temperatures of the health resorts; it's a large subject, and lends itself to detail."

"It will not be given in this house. What Tricky must endure with that man! He's simply possessed by a diabolic devil, and ought never to have married. Statistics don't amount to cruelty, I suppose, as a ground of divorce."

"Hardly, as yet; by-and-by, incompatibility in politics or fiction will be admitted; but how do you know that Mrs. Marsden does not appreciate her husband? You never can tell what a woman sees in a man. Perhaps this woman hungers for statistics as a make-weight. She is very amusing, but a trifle shallow, don't you think?"

"She used to be the brightest and most charming girl in our set, and I have always believed that she was married to Mr. Marsden by her people. Tricky has 600 a year, settled on her, and they were afraid of fortune hunters. Mothers are apt to feel that a girl is safe with a man of the Marsden type, and that nothing more can be desired."

"Perhaps they are not far wrong. Marsden is not a romantic figure, and he is scarcely what you would call a brilliant raconteur; but he serves his wife like a slave, and he will never give her a sore heart."

"Do you think it nothing, John, that a woman with ideals should be tied to a bore all her days? What a con-

benefit of your husband's conversation. With much love,
"Yours affectionately,
"Florence Leslie."

"P. S.—It does seem a shame that Mr. Marsden should have to waste an evening on a set of stupid people, and if he can't tear himself from his books, then you will take home a scolding to him from me."

"P. S.—If Mr. Marsden will not condescend, bring Godfrey to take care of you, and tell him that we shall expect some music."

"Come to this corner, Tricky, and let us have a quiet talk before the men arrive from the dining room. I hope your husband will be so good as to allow him of this special ordeal. Except perhaps John, I don't think there is a person here fit to discuss things with him."

"Oh, Mr. Marsden does not care one straw whether they know his subjects or not, so long as people will listen to him, and I'm sure he was quite eager to come, but I wanted Godfrey to have a little pleasure."

"I'm so sorry for poor Godfrey," and Mrs. Marsden settled herself down to confidences. "You know he lost all his money two years ago, through no fault of his own, by means of the stupidity of his partner, who was quite a common man, and could not carry out Godfrey's plans."

"His business partner has helped the firm through its difficulty, but he was quite obstinate and very unkind also. He spoke as if Godfrey had been careless and lazy, when the fellow really injured his health, and had to go to Brighton for two months to recruit."

"Yes, I remember," put in Mrs. Leslie; "we happened to be at the Metro pole one week, and Godfrey looked utterly jaded."

"You have no idea how beautifully he suffered, Florence, and how beautifully he bore the trial. Why, had it not been for me, he would not have had money to pay his hotel bill, and that was a dreadful change for a man like him. He has always been very proud, and much nettled by people who do not like him."

"The poor fellow has never been able to find a suitable post since, although he spends days in the city among his old friends, and I can see how it is killing him. And—Florence, I wouldn't mention to anyone except an old friend—Mr. Marsden has not made our house pleasant to poor Godfrey."

"You don't mean that he . . . reflects on his misfortunes?"

"Doesn't he? It's simply disgusting what he will say at times. Only yesterday morning this is absolutely between you and me, one must have some confidence—Godfrey made some remark in fun about the cut of Tom's coat; he will not go, you know, do what he likes, to a tailor."

"Godfrey is certainly much better dressed," said Mrs. Leslie, "than either of our husbands."

"Perhaps you are right, made Tom angry, but at any rate he said, quite shortly, 'I can't afford to dress better, and of course Godfrey knew what he meant. It was cruel in the circumstances for many men spend far more on their clothes than Godfrey. He simply gives his mind to the matter and takes care of his things; he will spend any time selecting a color or getting a coat fitted.'"

"Is your brother quite dependent on . . . his friends, Tricky?"

"Yes, in the meantime, and that is the reason why we ought to be the more considerate. I wished to settle half my income on him, but it is only a third of what it used to be—something to do with investments has reduced it—and Mr. Marsden would not hear of such a thing; he allows Godfrey 100 a year, but that hardly keeps him in clothes and pocket money."

"Still, don't you think it's all Godfrey could expect?" and Mrs. Leslie was inclined for once to defend this abused man. "Few husbands would do as much for a brother-in-law."

"Oh, of course he does it for my sake, and he means to be kind. But, Florence, Mr. Marsden is so careful and saving, always speaking as if we were poor, and had to lay up for the future, while I know he has a large income and a sure business."

"Why, he would not leave that horrid street in Highbury, say what I could; and I owe it to Godfrey that we have come to Putney. What Tom went out to Alexandria, my brother simply took our present house, and had it furnished in Mr. Marsden's style, and so when he came home from Alexandria we were established in the Cottage."

"John is the best of husbands, but I dare not have changed our house in his absence," and Mrs. Leslie began to get new views on the situation. "Was Mr. Marsden rather startled?"

"He was inclined to be angry with Godfrey, but I saw the boy off to Scarborough for a month; and he is never hasty to me, only tiresome—you can't imagine how tiresome."

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"Where are you going?" asked Marsden, following her with fond eyes. "You told me yesterday, but I forget; this illness has made me stupider than ever, I think. Wasn't it some charity?"

"It's the new society every one is so interested in. 'The Working Wives' Culture Union.' What is wanted is happy homes for the working men, and a freedom from the man orator, and the women must be elevated; so the East End is to be divided into districts, and two young women will be allotted to each. Are you listening?"

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A sad smile touched Marsden's lips for an instant. "And where do you meet today? It's a long way for you to go to Whitechapel."

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"Of course I know that's just a way of putting it, but I have taken lots of trouble about coming, and through no fault of my own, I shall be late."

"You're feeling much better, too, aren't you, today, Thomas?"

"The pain has almost ceased; perhaps it will be quite gone when you return. Can you spare just ten minutes to sit beside me? There is something I have been wanting to say to you, and this is my only chance. When I am well again I may . . . be afraid."

Mrs. Marsden sat down wondering, and her husband waited a minute. "One understands many things that puzzle him before, when he lies in quietness for weeks and takes an after-look. Yes, I suspected it at times, I was a coward and put the thought away from me."

"No one came to spend an hour with me, as men do with friends; and I noticed that they appeared to avoid me. I thought it was a fancy, and that I had grown self-conscious."

"Everything is quite plain now, and I . . . am not hurt, dear, and I don't blame any person; that would be very silly. I was a little more impatient with people before, but I might have made my life miserable."

"God gave me a dull mind and a slow tongue; it took me a long time to grasp anything, and I . . . cared about the subjects that interested me. Beatrice . . . I wish now you had told me how I had bored our friends; it would have been a kindness; but never mind that now; you did not like to give me pain."

"What troubles me most is that all these years you should have been tied to a very tiresome fellow," and Marsden made some poor attempt to smile. "Had I thought of what was before me, I would never have asked you to marry me."

"Don't cry, dear; I did not wish to hurt you. I wanted to ask your pardon for . . . all that misery, and . . . to thank you for . . . being my wife; and there's something else."

"You see, when I get well and am not lying in bed, maybe I could not tell you, so let me explain everything now, and then we need not speak about such things again."

"Perhaps you mean too economical, but I was saving for a purpose. Your portion has not brought you so much as it did, and I wished to make it up to you, and now you can have 600 a year as before. My illness had gone against me, you would have been quite comfortable—in money, I mean, dear."

"No, I insist on your going to Lady Godfrey, and the rich silver of gas, and I'll be here distilling the Reformation, you know," and he smiled, better this time, quite creditably, in fact. "You give me a kiss to say I'll be here."

When the nurse came down at 4 to take charge, she was horrified to find her patient alone, and in the death agony, but conscious and able to speak.

"Don't ring, nor send for my wife . . . I sent . . . her away knowing that the end was near . . . made her go, in fact . . . against her will."

The nurse gave him brandy, and he became stronger for a minute. "She has had a great deal to bear with me, and I . . . did not wish her to see death. My manner has been all wrong, and so when she came home from Alexandria we were established in the Cottage."

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Consumption and its Cure

To THE EDITOR:—I have an absolute remedy for Consumption and all Throat and Lung Troubles. By its timely use thousands of hopeless cases have been already permanently cured. So proof-positive am I of its power that I consider it my duty to send two bottles free to those of your readers who have Consumption or any Lung Trouble if they will write me their express and post-office address.

Established 1876.
The Editorial and Business Management of this Paper Guarantee the Genuineness of the above Proposition.

SENATOR JONES' BRAVE DEED.

Heroic Chapter in the Life of the Nevadan.

GREAT FIRE IN A MINE.

BLAZE IN THE YELLOW JACKET IN THE YEAR 1869.

Carelessness of a Miner Leaving a Burning Candle Smoking in the Timber of a Drift—Impressed Miners Fall Stricken—Cages Traverse Reeking Shafts—Tragic Scenes on the Lower Levels.

(Written for The Herald.)
[Copyrighted 1895, by S. S. McClure, Limited.]
BY ELLIOT LEROI.

In the greatest underground fight with fire that ever was waged in this country, a most important part was borne by a well-known Senator of the United States, John P. Jones, of Nevada. Some time during the night of the sixth of April, 1869, a careless miner left a lighted candle sticking in the timbers of a drift in the Yellow Jacket mine, on the line of the famous Comstock lode in western Nevada. No where was such recklessness more

gushing out of the mouths of the shaft grew denser and more deadly, but the striving miners clung stubbornly to the forlorn hope of rescuing their comrades. Again and again the cages were sent down through the shafts now reeking with fumes and held at the lower station to offer relief to possible survivors, but with all they might with eyes and ears strained to catch the faintest response, no answering signal was given. In the strain of horror the crowd scarcely stirred or spoke. Here and there was a convulsing sobbing but no frantic cries or movements. Strong hearts break silently and the weaker ones were stupefied by the shock.

So many women stood, staring vacantly, with clenched hands and swaying bodies while they waited untiringly hour after hour for news of their loved ones.

Every possible effort was made to rescue the doomed men, and the chief director of the struggle was John P. Jones, superintendent of the Crown Point mine. He had come to the big lode from California, little more than a year before. Then he had hardly a dollar in his pockets, but his working capital of brains and energy was unsurpassed by anybody. He went to the front at once, first in charge of the Kentucky mine and next of the Crown Point, where he was seeking the bonanza which he finally unearthed. So he took the lead in the fight with the fire, as a matter of course, and unhesitatingly.